

Seven Factors of Enlightenment

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Dec 2005

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BV: As I was reading about the seven factors of enlightenment not too long ago, I say not too long ago, a year or so ago, I started realizing that the seven factors of enlightenment actually should be nine factors instead of seven, because there are some preliminary steps first.

You need to have real **'curiosity'**. You want to find out how all of the seven factors work, and with that curiosity you need to be **'persistent'** with being able to watch it. So these first two, although their not mentioned in the seven factors of enlightenment, they are real important. See the whole thing with Buddhism is how things work. I just gave a retreat in North Carolina and the people had been practicing one-pointed concentration and they were very much hooked on being at peace and calm. And that's not what the meditation is about. The meditation is about being able to see how your mind's attention moves around and how you become attached. But with one-pointed concentration, your mind goes onto the object of meditation and it stays glued there and they feel that that's really peaceful and calm and they like that. But the force of the concentration stops, it doesn't allow any hindrances to arise. And your hindrances are where your attachments are. That's where you are identifying with everything. That's where your suffering really is, it's with the hindrances.

So if you're practicing one-pointed concentration and the force of the concentration pulls down the mind, the mind gets pulled down so tightly that the hindrances don't arise, you actually don't learn very much from your meditation. Although you can be peaceful and calm, you don't learn how mind moves. And the Buddha was very big on having you understand how mind works, how mind and body work together. The first factor of the enlightenment factors has to do with **'Mindfulness'**. And this is a word that is used fairly often. But there's not too many real definitions that are out there for mindfulness. I heard one monk give a talk and he talked about getting rid of mind and mindfulness. But that really doesn't have much to do with the practice of meditation. Mindfulness is 'the observation of mind's attention and seeing it is an impersonal process'. Seeing the movements of mind's attention from one thing to another, and seeing it [this movement] as being impersonal.

So that's a definition that you can use and it works throughout the Buddhist scriptures. Works very well. We're made up of five aggregates, this psycho-physical process is made up of five things. We have a physical body. There's feeling. Feeling is pleasant, unpleasant, neutral. There's perception. Perception is the thing that puts names on things. [picks up a cup and holds it up] It's the part that says, you look at this and you say, "This is a cup." Perception is the thing that gave a name to it. It also has memory involved with it. And you have thoughts and you have consciousness.

TT: 5:00

Now when a feeling arises, whether it's pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, we have thoughts arise about the feeling. And the more we try to think the feeling and control the feeling with our thoughts, the bigger and more intense the feeling becomes. Now this is with any kind of emotional state, it doesn't matter if it's fear or anxiety, sadness, depression, anger, whatever the catch of the day happens to be. They always work in the same way. It's an unpleasant mental feeling arises. And then there's all kinds of thoughts about that feeling. "I don't like that feeling, I want it to stop." And the thoughts are also, they have to do with the story; the story of why you like or dislike that feeling.

Now when you practice meditation, I teach you to sit without moving. And when you sit without moving for a period of time there can be some sensations that arise in your body. And that can be painful sensation. What happens right after that sensation arises is your mind starts to think about all kinds of reasons why you don't like that, and why you want it to go away. You try to think of ways to control it and make it not be a disturbance for you. But the more you think, the bigger the feeling gets. Until that feeling becomes so intense that it turns into an emergency and you have to do something about it. But the instructions in the meditation are to first notice that you are thinking thoughts about the feeling. Let the thoughts go. That means notice that you're thinking, but don't keep your attention on those thoughts anymore. Let those thoughts go and relax. Every thought that arises causes tension or tightness in both your mind and your body. So you need to relax that.

Now you'll notice that the feeling is there and there's a tight mental fist around that feeling. When a feeling arises, it's there. Any time we try to control a feeling, any time we try to make the feeling change, any time we try to make the

feeling be the way we want it to be, you can look forward to more suffering. Now not liking a feeling when it arises, all that does is it makes your mind tighten more around that feeling, tighter and tighter and tighter. And it's like taking a hot coal and putting it in your hand. You say, "Well that hurts." And you start to tighten around it. You tighten more and tighten more, and then you really get burned. And it's a very, very big pain. That's when it turns into an emergency. But when the feeling arises, and you see that you have that tight mental fist around it, you let the feeling be. It's okay for that feeling to be there. It has to be, because it's there. So you're not trying to fight it. You're not trying to control it. You're practicing loving acceptance of the present moment. When you allow a feeling to be there by itself, you can let it float around, do whatever it wants to do. It can go from here to up here, it doesn't matter. Let it be, relax, come back to your object of meditation.

Now when you're practicing loving-kindness, the feeling of loving-kindness is a warm, glowing feeling in the center of your chest. And then you make a wish for your happiness or someone else's happiness. But you feel that wish. You know what it feels like to be peaceful and calm. Then you [bring that person and] put that [feeling] around [them] and radiate that feeling.

TT: 10:00

Now the relaxing part of the meditation is the thing that's really unique to the Buddha's practice. Nobody else practices and gives the instructions of relaxing. Now what's the difference? When you're practicing absorption concentration or one-pointed concentration, your mind is on your object of meditation, gets distracted, you let go of the distraction, and immediately come back to your object of meditation. When you're practicing the tranquility meditation, that the Buddha taught, your mind is on your object of meditation, gets distracted, that's the same. Now you let go of the distraction, that's the same. But you add one extra step, and that's letting go of the tension and tightness caused by that movement of your attention. When you let go of that tension and tightness, you'll feel your mind kind of open up, expand and then become calm. You'll notice at that time, there're no thoughts in your mind. There's just this pure awareness. And you bring that mind back to your object of meditation. When you add that one extra step of relaxing to your meditation, it changes the entire meditation, not just a little bit. It changes it a lot.

Now what is this doing? What is this tension and tightness that arises? According to the Buddha's teaching, in order to see, you have to have an Eye [points to his eye] in good working order. And there has to be color and form. [he points at a colored vase]. When the eye hits the color and form, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of these three things is called Contact. With eye-contact as condition, eye-feeling arises. That's pleasant, painful, neither painful-nor-pleasant. Right after eye-feeling, with eye-feeling as condition, eye craving arises. The craving always manifests as tension and tightness in your mind and in your body. The craving is the thing that is easiest to notice in the entire process of Dependent Origination.

S: And a person can learn to see Feeling arise too?

BV: Is that right? Yeah, pretty much, yeah, but that comes later. I think the feeling might be just as easy to notice. Anyway, the craving mind is the "I like it, I don't like it" mind. It's the mind that grabs on, or the mind that tries to push away. So when you see that you have a thought that's distracted your attention, you let go of that thought and you relax, what have you done? You've let go of the craving.

Now all of this is very much interwoven with the **Four Noble Truths**. The **First Noble Truth** we all pretty much know and recognize. That's **suffering**. Things don't go the way we want them to, that's suffering. Feeling comes up that we don't want to come up, that's suffering. All of these different problems that we have in our life; they're forms of suffering. So that's the First Noble Truth.

The Second Noble Truth is, the cause of suffering is craving. And you see craving has got a pretty big bum rap. It's got a pretty big rap. It's what the Four Noble Truths are all about. It's about craving, how to let go of the craving, and the path leading to the way to let go of the craving.

TT: 15:00

Now when you remember that craving always manifests as tension and tightness in your mind and in your body, then when you let go of that tension and tightness, what have you done? You've let go of the craving, that's the Third Noble Truth. That's the cessation of craving. Now you have a very pure mind when that happens. And you bring that mind back to your object of meditation.

Now I just got through saying that there's three kind of feeling. In one presentation, that's what the Buddha gave. In another presentation he gave that there's five kinds of feeling. In another he gave that there's six kinds of feeling. In another he gave that there's eighteen kinds of feeling. In another he gave there's thirty-six. In another there's one hundred and eight! I'm not going to go into all of those for you. When feeling arises...O.K. I'll go into five for you, just because it's easier to understand. In Pāli, it's dukkha, sukha, domanassa, somanassa, upekkhā. Dukkha is painful physical feeling. Sukha is pleasant physical feeling. Domanassa is painful mental feeling, painful emotions. Somanassa is pleasant mental feelings. Upekkhā is equanimity. That's balance of mind. Upekkha is the highest feeling that you can experience. Every time you let go of the distraction and relax, you're starting to develop more and more equanimity, and this is one of the enlightenment factors. I haven't really talked too much about them.

Okay, the enlightenment factors just so we all get on the same page. They are **Mindfulness**, there's **Investigation** of

your experience, there's **Energy**, there's **Joy**, there's **Tranquility**, there's **collectedness of mind** and there's **equanimity**. Okay, you don't have to memorize all of these; I'll be going over them again and again. But you start to see how even the factors of enlightenment become interconnected. When I'm talking about: as your mindfulness develops, you start gaining more balance of mind. You start gaining more equanimity. You stop identifying with the thoughts and the feelings as being yours personally.

Have you ever noticed how you can have [a bad day]. You can start a day and really have a good start to the day. You get up and you're wide awake and you're happy and everything is good. And then you go into work and things just are not going very well. Now what happens to your happy mood? It starts to get a little sour. Starts to go downhill. Did you ask that to happen? No. It happened by itself. If somebody comes up to you when you go to work and they read the riot act, and they give you all kinds of anger, what's the normal response to that? You take their anger, make it your anger, throw it back at them. Now you're fighting, you're at war. And you say things you wish you hadn't said, and you do things you wish you hadn't done. But they go away. What happens in your mind right after that? This is all because of attachment. And the attachment is the belief that these thoughts and feelings are 'yours' personally. When they go away, you start thinking about what they said, and what you said, and what you should have said, and you think you're right and they're wrong. They shouldn't have done that that way. And then a little while later, just like it's on a tape deck, you have these thoughts running through again!

TT: 20:00

Same words, same order every thing. Any time you see repeat thoughts, that is telling you right then, you have a hindrance in your mind, well, or two. Actually you have two hindrances in your mind at that time, because you have restlessness and you have aversion, dislike, hatred. And you're identifying with those thoughts and feelings and taking them very personally. Now the truth is, you didn't ask these [to happen or] this the whole situation to arise. It arose because the conditions were right for it to arise. *What you do with what arises in the present moment, dictates what happens in the future.* If your mindfulness is not very sharp, and you don't see how this process is working, and you get caught by it, and you get caught up in taking these feelings and thoughts to be yours personally, that's a cause of suffering.

So, you had a fight with this person first thing in the morning. You started out being very happy. Now you had a fight with this person and you've been thinking your repeat thoughts about the situation and then what happens when the next person walks up and they say something that you might not hear quite correctly? You hear them have an edge on their voice. They might not mean anything by it. All of the sudden the anger from the past experience starts pulling over into the present experience! This is how your mind gets clouded by taking thoughts and feelings personally. Okay?

So, this is how it goes all day. You walk around in kind of a daze, because you've had these colored glasses of anger showing you how everything is happening during the day because of that attachment to what happened way back when. That's a dream. That's so far ago that it's still affecting you in the present moment right now. This is how attachments work. It's always a frightening thing to see people that get angry in traffic jams and things like that, because they start driving and you know they're not really driving anymore! They're thinking! Or it's really frightening to see people with a telephone while they are trying to drive. There're a lot of countries in the world that do not allow you to be moving in a vehicle at all if you have a cell phone. And really it's a lot safer, because you're not paying attention to what you're doing. Somebody puts on the breaks in front and you don't see because you're thinking about what you're going to say next to the person you're talking to. Bang, there's an accident. That's how accidents happen for the most part. A lack of true mindfulness of what mind is doing in the present moment.

The next part of the enlightenment factors is one of my favorite parts and that is the '**Investigation**' of your experience. The mindfulness is about observing how mind works. The investigation goes a little bit deeper. You want to see exactly how your mind was very happy, and all of a sudden it's unhappy. How did that happen? How did it go from being happy to unhappy? It didn't just all of a sudden jump there. It is part of a process.

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The meditation is learning how to investigate how mind movements work. How does it work? You're sitting in meditation and all of a sudden a sound arises and then there's anger. How did that happen? What happened first? What happened after that? What happened after that? What happened after that? This is a very rapid process that's continually happening. In order to hear you have to have an Ear that's working. Sound has to arise. Then ear-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition, feeling arises. With feeling as condition, craving arises. With craving a condition, clinging arises. What's clinging? Clinging is the identification with all of the thoughts and feelings. It's taking all of the thoughts and making them personal. It's taking all of the feelings that arise and making them personal.

Now somebody comes by and they honk the horn. Did you ask that to happen? It happened because the conditions were right for it to happen. A feeling arose. Unpleasant. "I don't want to be disturbed!" Especially when I'm sitting in meditation. But the truth is, sounds happen. And it's okay for them to happen. It has to be okay, because that's the truth. Sounds arise. That's just the way it works. The dissatisfaction and the dislike, the critical thoughts about why did that person have to do that; that's all part of clinging. The "I like it, I don't like it" mind. When a feeling arises, is the craving.

Now there's one other aspect of this process and that's your habitual tendency. They call it 'being' in many Buddhist circles. But it's your habitual tendency. When this particular feeling arises, I always think about it in this way. When this sad feeling arises, I always think about it sadly. What you want to do is see how the process works. It doesn't matter whether it's seeing or hearing or tasting or touching or feeling or thinking. The process works the same way for all of these different sense doors. There's a consciousness that comes up, there's contact, there's feeling, there's craving, there's clinging, there's being. When you're sitting in meditation, and one of the sense doors arises, the directions in the meditation say allow that to be. Or if you're starting to think about it, let go of the thought, relax, allow it to be; relax, come back to your object of meditation.

Relax.

Now the problem is with hindrances, the problem is with different kinds of sensations, different things that can arise, is that they don't go away right away. So your mind goes back to it. Then you have to do it in the same way again. You let go of the thoughts, relax, you let go of the feelings, relax. You come back to your object of meditation. You might spend your whole time while you're doing your meditation just doing that. Coming back and forth.

TT: 30:00

Now there's an advantage to doing this, because as you become more familiar with how your mind went from being here, to over here, you start recognizing little pieces. How these things happen. You start seeing how the feeling arises. You start seeing how the tension arises and when the thoughts start to come up and you start letting go of those more and more easily, more and more quickly. You start gaining more equanimity in your mind. You start having more balance. So the investigation of your experience is a very important aspect of the meditation.

Now there's **Five Hindrances**.

There's **lust, greed, "I want it."**

There's **hatred, aversion, "I don't want it."**

There's **sleepiness and dullness, "I'm tired."**

There's **restlessness, anxiety: "I feel like jumping out of my skin, I'm restless."**

And there's **doubt: "I don't know. I don't know if I'm doing this correctly or not."**

Now when these hindrances arise, they will take your mind and stop you from meditating. You'll get so involved in the lust or the hatred or the sleepiness or the restlessness or the doubt. You'll get so involved with that, you'll forget that you're doing any meditation at all. When you're sitting in meditation, and your mind starts to dull out a little bit, you'll start to notice how this process works. You'll start to notice that your mind starts to get a little dreamy, and then it gets big dreamy, and then your body starts to slump, and you get duller and duller, and then finally you start nodding. Okay? What's the cause of that? The cause of that is the amount of **'Energy'** that you're putting into the practice; in the amount of energy you're using to stay with your spiritual friend when you're sending loving-kindness to them; the amount of interest that you have in staying with your object of meditation. When you start to dull out, that's not a natural thing. It means that you're not putting the right amount of energy, which is the third enlightenment factor. But the thing is, if you put too much energy in, it's going to make you restless, and if you don't put enough in, it's going to make you dull. And this is not a consistent amount of energy. Just like you don't feel the same kind of energy every day. Some days it's high energy, some days it's not so high. It's the same with the meditation. You have to be able to adjust the amount of energy that you're putting into watching your meditation and practicing your meditation. And you have to be able to tweak it a little bit every now and then. Put in a little bit more, not quite so much. See what's happening with your meditation itself.

Now the hindrances are incredibly important because this is where all of your attachments are. So it's real interesting learning about the amount of energy you need to put into your practice, because that's always changing a little bit. And as you go deeper into your practice, the amount of energy you have to put in becomes very critical, because you can knock yourself into dullness or into restlessness very easily. It's like when you start out meditating, it's just like walking down this row of chairs, there's a big, wide walkway.

TT: 34:55

And to walk from here to there you know how all the energy is, but as you go deeper in the practice, that walkway starts getting thinner and thinner and thinner until it's walking on a tightrope. And then that rope gets thinner and thinner and thinner and it's like walking on a cobweb, one strand. So that you have to learn how to work with your energy, the energy that you put into your practice. All along the way. And this is why it's one of the enlightenment factors. When you put in exactly the right amount of energy, you will start to notice something very pleasant happening, and that is that **'Joy'** starts to arise.

Now the enlightenment factor of joy, when you look at a Buddha image you'll see that he has this little kind of funny little; grin on his face. The artist is trying to show you that he has this enlightenment factor. And you'll notice a lot of the Buddha images, they'll be sitting with their eyes partly closed. The artist is showing that this is part of the joy enlightenment factor. When the joy gets fairly strong, you will have that little grin on your face, because it's a very pleasant feeling. The joy is very important for balance in your practice. It's the middle factor. It's the apex of the seesaw. When you have joy in your mind, your mind is very clear. Your mind is very alert and agile.

37:11

Now joy is not going to stay around for real long periods of time, depending on where your practice is. Sometimes it can last for an hour, two hours, something like that, but it doesn't last for a lot longer than that. Always after joy fades away, tranquility arises. And by tranquility, I mean real, real, peaceful, calm. There's not a lot of activity in your mind, but there can still be sounds arising, and your mind goes to that sound. But your equanimity, that balance of mind is starting to be stronger too. All of these factors, they start to arise together. So they are all getting stronger and stronger as you go deeper into your practice.

Now let's get back to your hindrances again. Why are the hindrances so important? The hindrances are important because they distract your mind away from your object of meditation, you let go of that, you relax, you come back to your object of meditation, and you bounce back and forth a little bit. Now when you start seeing this as part of a process, instead of "This is me, this is who I am", you start seeing it more and more impersonally, then you're not holding onto that and trying to control it. Now you're starting to see that this is a hindrance and it's there, and it's by itself, and every time you let go of that hindrance and let it be there, it gets a little weaker, and little weaker, and a little weaker, until finally it gets so weak, it won't even arise again. When that happens, you have an immediate sense of relief, and right after that, you have what's called uplifting joy. And the uplifting joy, your mind is very happy, you will be smiling. And your mind is light, and the feeling in your body is very light; you feel almost like your floating. When that fades away, you feel very comfortable in your body and in your mind. And this is what the Buddha called happiness.

TT: 40:00

Right after that you'll notice that your mind is very tranquil, very, it's still, peaceful, calm, composed. Okay, the reason that that arose is because you let go of an attachment. You let go of the hindrance. So you'll be able to sit like this for a little while. You can still hear sounds. You get up and you start doing your walking meditation. You can still be in this state, you can still have the joy, the happiness, the tranquility. But that's only going to last for so long. And then your mindfulness is going to slip. Because your mindfulness is not very strong yet. But as it slips, then another hindrance arises. And now you have to work with this one. And you work with this, and work with this, until finally it gets weaker and weaker and then it fades away. That's a relief, the joy you experience is deeper. What I've just been describing to you is called *jhāna* in the Pāli language. In Sanskrit they call it *dhyana*. When you see mostly it's either Chinese or Japanese Buddha images and you see them like this, that is to signify that's he's sitting in *jhāna*. That's called a -

S: Mudra.

BV: mudra, thank you. And there's people that make all kinds of big deals about mudras, you have to hold your hands just, so they're barely touching and don't move. But you know what the Buddha was talking about when his hand was like that? [*right-hand thumb touching the first finger*]"This is the First Noble Truth. [*thumb touching the second finger*] This is the Second Noble Truth. [*...touching the third finger*] This is the Third Noble Truth. [*...touching the baby finger*]This is the Fourth Noble Truth."

Anyway. The word *jhāna* is one of the more misunderstood words in America today in the Buddhist circles, because they say *jhāna* means concentration, *jhāna* means absorption, *jhāna* means having your mind glued to your object of meditation. *Jhāna* means this is a level of your understanding of how the process of movement of mind works. Movement of mind's attention works I should say. It's a level of your understanding. So when you get to the first *jhāna*, it's nice; it's great to be able to experience it, but you know you're not done. You've got more to do. You know that. And then when your mindfulness slips off, now you have the hindrance to work with. Now you're starting to see a little more closely how this process works. The investigation of your experience gets sharper. Your observation power becomes clearer. The adjustment with your energy becomes finer. And when you let go of the hindrance, the joy, that clarity of mind, that uplifted feeling is very strong. The joy will be there for a period of time, fade away, now you have '**tranquility**'. You have a very, very peaceful, calm mind.

The next factor is called the enlightenment factor of '**Concentration**' [**changes this to say 'Collectedness'**]. But I don't like to use that word, especially in this country, because concentration doesn't mean the same thing as it does in Asia.

TT: 44:59

In this country it means making your focus so fine that it just stays on one thing and that's it. Now when that happens, you're not able to see anything that's happening around you. ***The kind of concentration that the Buddha was talking about was a stillness of mind, but very alert so that you still have peripheral vision. You can see things starting to come up.*** Now I'll tell you how mind works. When you have strong stillness of mind, you'll begin to see

this. Mindfulness slips just a little tiny bit, the energy isn't quite right, so you start losing it. Mind starts wobbling, like this, and then it gets bigger wobble, and bigger wobble until finally it goes away. Now when you start to go deeper into your practice, you'll be able to see this start to happen. And when you see your mind starting to wobble, then you relax, right then. You've let go of the craving. You've let go of the attachment.

Yes?

S: So at that point in time you're adjusting your energy?

BV: You're adjusting your energy, that's right! And this brings a kind of satisfaction that causes joy to be there. But it's not this overwhelming joy of the first two jhānas. This is a peaceful, calm kind of joy. It's like when you finally figure something out and you got it, you know it. You know there's not this overwhelming joy, but there's this deep understanding of, "Yeah, that's it." That's the kind of joy I'm talking about!

So there's little tweaks of your energy that you need to have happen. And the stillness of mind, the composedness of mind is the kind of concentration that the Buddha was talking about. And of course I've been talking about the 'Equanimity' all along. That balance of mind. When you go from one jhāna to the next jhāna, your level of balance of mind is stronger. And it keeps getting stronger and stronger and stronger. When you finally get to the fourth jhāna, you don't have joy arising, you don't have happiness arising. They're too coarse a feeling for your mind. You have true equanimity, true balance of mind. That's not to say you won't feel a pain if somebody took a knife and stabbed you. You would feel it. But it's not going to make your mind wobble. You're going to see it for what it is. You have the equanimity. You have that balance, and this is real stuff. Too many times with Buddhist lecturers, they start talking about equanimity and it's not real. It's like a state that's way over here that we're supposed to experience, but nobody really knows much how to talk about it. The equanimity that you start to experience from the third jhāna or, actually from the first jhāna on, becomes more and more real. Now what's the advantage of having equanimity?

These enlightenment factors don't only happen when you are sitting. They can be around all the time. The more balance you have in your mind, the easier it is to face somebody that has anger and not take that anger and make it yours and throw it back at them. It's easier to see that person is suffering and let them be and relax and radiate loving-kindness to them because they need it at that time. It's much easier to have that sort of thing arise because of the balance of mind. You don't get caught in your emotional snits so easily anymore.

TT: 50:00

And that's not to say it won't happen, but won't happen for as long and it won't be as intense. Because this is a gradual practice and a gradual training. How many years have you lived with your habitual tendency towards this state or that state. Anger or anxiety or depression or whatever. Or sadness, I mean that fear, whatever, it really doesn't matter what it is. What we're starting to do with this kind of awareness is we're starting to see how these things arise and we start to get equanimity to them, so there's balance. So when this feeling arises, your mind doesn't immediately take it and run. You start seeing it more for what it is, and you start letting it go and relaxing. You start really seeing clearly how mind works. That leads to deep, deep contentment and happiness.

BV: I'll give you an instance of, I was with some people and they were very highly emotional. And they were yelling at each other all the time. And it's just, not for me, I'm not interested in what they're saying or what they're doing, I just let them be. And they started noticing that I wasn't getting involved in their drama. And then they started noticing that they could have a very heavy emotional outbreak of anger, whatever and the next time I saw them I treated them the same every time. Now this was because I have equanimity in my mind. I'm not taking anything that they're saying personally at all, I'm seeing it for what it is. I'm radiating loving-kindness into the situation because I want that situation to change. And that's the only way you can make a situation change, is by loving it. But then again I've been practicing meditation for thirty years. And they just started. There's an awful lot of people, that they start practicing meditation for a period of time and then they want to be a teacher. And to a lot of these people, being a teacher means sitting where I'm sitting and talking and telling you how smart I am. But the real teacher is the example you set for other people. So if you want to find out what a teacher is like, you don't spend time with that teacher, you spend time with his students, see what they are like. And if their students are really nice and they have balanced minds, then you can pretty much reasonably see that, "Yeah, this might be a good teacher to be practicing with."

Now there's certain aspects of the Buddha's teaching, that when he talked about meditation. It was: **there's three different parts to the meditation.** And two of them are active. They're active parts of the meditation.

1) Practicing your generosity. Say things that make other people happy. Do things that make other people happy. Think about these other people with a happy mind. Think about their positive aspects. Don't dwell on their negative aspects. This is part of generosity. Practice giving your thoughts, your speech, and your action.

TT: 55:01

Giving it away. Give it to other people. As much as you can remember to do that. Now the loving-kindness meditation, I very strongly encourage everyone to smile. And the reason I want you to smile is because that's one of

the easiest ways to help change the world around you in a positive way. Go into a bunch of strangers. Go into a shopping mall, especially now, go in with a sour face and see how many other people start copying you. Then change and start smiling to everybody you see. Watch what happens. It's amazing. Watch the feeling in that area. How it changes. It's really something.

You affect the world around you. Whether you like that idea or not, you do, when you practice having an uplifted mind, you practice saying things to complete strangers that are kind. I mean, the cashier that's being harassed because the line is so long and everybody that comes up to her, they're not happy. You take the time to say things to make her happy, and just lightly chit-chat. That will make her whole day, and then she'll affect everybody else that comes through. You affect the world around you. Everybody wants to have peace in the world. Everybody. You want peace, be peaceful. You want the world to be happy, be happy. Start affecting the world around you in a conscious way. The more you do that, the more magic you will see happen in life. I mean real magic. It's real magic to watch a little baby go from crying to smiling. It's really magic. It makes you feel good when you help them do that. That's the first part of meditation. You're practicing your generosity. Now a lot of people when they hear the word generosity they think, "Oh, he wants me to give him something." Yeah, I want you to give me your smile. I want you to give me kind thoughts. And help somebody. That's all I want.

2) Keeping the five precepts is incredibly important if you want to have a mind that's peaceful and calm. Because when you break the precepts, get remorse in your mind. You know you shouldn't have done that and that will affect your meditation very negatively, sometimes for a very long period of time. **What are the precepts?**

1) Don't kill or harm living beings on purpose. Mosquitos, cockroaches, insects, alligators, everything. Snakes. Why? Because if you kill another being it causes a guilty feeling to arise in your mind. It causes fear to arise when you're sitting in meditation. It causes anxiety to arise when you're sitting in meditation. So don't do that. It's that simple.

2) Don't take anything that's not given. Don't steal something from somebody else. How do you feel when somebody steals something from you? Don't cause that feeling to arise in anybody else.

TT: 1:00:00

I met a guy, he'd spent time in prison because he went some place, it was like a Masonic Lodge or something like that right after a big thing. And he broke into the safe, and he stole \$25,000 or \$30,000, and then he got caught for it and he had to go to jail for seven or eight years. And I started talking with him about that, I said: "You had all that money. How long did it last?" He said, "Oh, I had that money for a week or ten days. It all just kind of disappeared." That's what happens when you steal. What you steal doesn't stay around very long. And it doesn't lead to your happiness. So if you want prosperity to happen, if you want things to stay around for a long period of time, give. The more you give, the more you get. It works that way.

3) Don't indulge in wrong sexual activity. Wrong sexual activity is sexual activity with someone that's too young, they're still under the care of their parents or guardian. No sexual activity with another person's mate. No sexual activity with prostitutes. Now that pretty much leaves it wide open when you look at it. I mean, for sexual activity that's very few restrictions.

4) The next precept is don't tell lies. Don't gossip, don't curse. Use kind speech. Any time you say something that you know is not true, even the little white lies, your mind says, "I shouldn't have said that." It causes you to become restless. Causes you mind to be overactive. Causes fear to arise. Causes a lot of anxiety.

5) The last precept is don't take drugs or alcohol. How does that affect your meditation right now? Remember that dullness I was talking about? Causes your mind to get dull. And I hear these things of, "Yeah, it's okay to have a glass of wine every now and then." No, it's not. When I was in Burma I had a cold and the doctor said "I want you to take an aspirin." I'd been doing a lot of meditation. I took the aspirin and I looked at it for a long time, because I knew that it was going to affect my mind. So I took half an aspirin. It ruined my meditation for an entire day. That's an aspirin. Think of what a beer does to you or a glass of wine. It can affect you for three or four days, or even longer. Your mind will have a tendency to dull out. It's hard to keep your attention and your interest going on your object of meditation. And one of the main reasons for not taking drugs and alcohol is that you have a tendency to break one of the other precepts when you do. So don't do that.

[NOTE: Practicing the Meditation is the 3rd part of the Meditation Practice.]

Now there's another way that you can *use the factors of enlightenment*. When your mind dulls out, you get sloth and torpor arising. You need to have your mindfulness, pick up your energy, and your investigation in how that arises. So the first three factors of the enlightenment factors are what you use to help put that energy back into balance, so that you can have joy arise. So that the hindrance doesn't keep pulling you down.

TT: 1:05:01

When you have restlessness in your mind, you feel like you're jumping out of your skin, you feel like you can't stand it, you have to move, that's when you don't move at all. And you start focusing your mind on tranquility. You know what the feeling of tranquility is, bring that into your body, bring that into your mind. You know that what the

feeling of stillness is, bring that into your body, bring that into your mind. You know what the feeling of equanimity is, bring that feeling into your body, into your mind. When you do that, then you stop taking these hindrances so personally. And it's easier to have the balance of, "Oh, it's only this, let it be, relax, and come back."

The factors of enlightenment are for balancing. And joy is right in the middle of that. Because every time you've let go of a hindrance, you're going to have some joy, you're going to have some relief.

S: Is the Enlightenment Factor of Joy always strong?

BV: Well, it's not going to be overpowering like in the lower stages of your meditation. It's a different kind of joy. This kind of joy is all-pervading joy, and you just feel happy; just like you've figured out something.

Now each one of these levels of meditation are different levels of your understanding. Your understanding of how mind's attention moves from one thing to another. Now when you practice one pointed concentration, it's like what I was talking about. You just have your mind focused on one thing and you don't see anything else around you. You just have your mind there. But with the Buddha's meditation, this is where you see your peripheral vision, you see things start to arise and you can let them go right then and relax. So it's a different kind of awareness that the Buddha taught then what most other meditation practices are teaching today. I think it's safe to say that.

Okay, let's share some merit then.

May suffering ones, be suffering free

And the fear struck, fearless be

May the grieving shed all grief

And may all beings find relief.

May all beings share this merit that we have thus acquired

For the acquisition of all kinds of happiness.

May beings inhabiting space and earth

Devas and nagas of mighty power

Share this merit of ours.

May they long protect the Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . .

Source : <http://dhammasukha.org>